

MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, May 23, 2007

2:30 p.m.

Room 307 House Office Building, Lansing

Representative Mayes, Chair, called the meeting to order.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Representatives Mayes, Byrum, Brown, Kathleen Law, Leland, Sheltroun, Walker, Nitz, Ball, Meekhof. (10/11)

ABSENT/EXCUSED: Representative Angerer. (1/11)

Representative Sheltroun made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 16, 2007. No objections being offered, a unanimous ballot was cast to accept the minutes as presented.

Representative Walker made a motion to excuse absent members. No objections being offered, absent members were excused.

Tonia Ritter, representing the Michigan Farm Bureau, spoke to the Committee and reviewed the history of the organization; involvement in the legislative process and issues of concern; the policy process and county and state policy development committees; state annual meeting activities; and 2007 key policy initiatives. Questions were answered for Committee members.

Gayle Miller, representing the Sierra Club, provided information related to current activities, legislative issues and concerns. Ms. Miller discussed the importance of Michigan's agricultural and animal industries; Sierra Club concern with CAFO's and interest in the Agriculture Committee holding hearings on this issue; concerns with corn-based ethanol; methane digesters; farmland preservation; and the right-to-farm. Questions were answered for Committee members.

James Clift, representing the Michigan Environmental Council, provided a brief background and reviewed aspects of the annual report; growth areas; issues of concern, including land use and farmland preservation and how to make it as cost effective as possible; water protection (quality and quantity); energy (bio-diesel and bio-fuels; renewable energy); the MAEAP program; and CAFO's. Questions were answered for Committee members.

There being no additional business before the Committee, Chair Mayes declared the meeting adjourned, the time being 3:35 p.m.

Representative Jeff Mayes, Chair

Catherine Petroskey, Committee Clerk
(517) 373-8538